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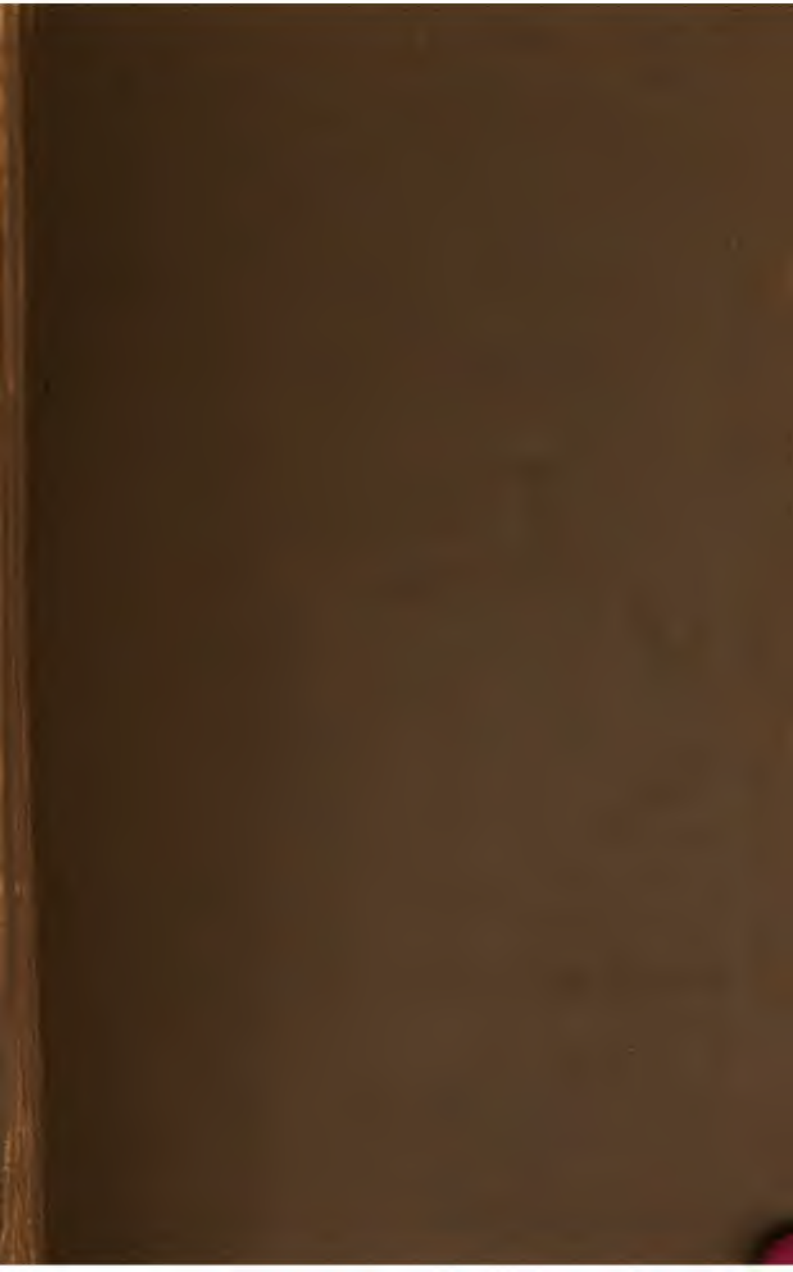
LEPARON

TO PAVOLA

AND OTHER POEMS

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POEMS

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

LEPARON TO PAVOLA

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

EDWARD ARUNDEL GEARE

S. JOHN'S COLL. CAMBRIDGE

LONDON

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1871

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LEPARON TO PAVOLA.

Four chairs around the hearth ; one tenantless :
Three friends, where four for many years had met ;
Three chairs filled by these three: that other void,
At least to outward sense ; and where was he
Whose form in other years had filled the fourth ?

A roaring fire of logs high in the grate,
A table set with glass and spirit flask,
And store of weed narcotic ; from the hob
A comfortable sound of hissing steam :
And three sit down where four were wont to meet.
To-night no voice ' a double and two up ; '

For who could take the hand that he should hold ?
No spectre-partner fills that empty seat !

Without, a white pall on the frozen ground,
A bitter, cutting night ! A sound of woe
Sweeps through the bared boughs of the walnut trees,
That stand like mutes before a house of death ;
Mourners to-night for some sweet innocent,
Not black their scarfs and bands, but virgin white !
Beyond, the river silver'd o'er with ice,
Unsafe as yet for eager boys and girls ;
Yet farther, meadows bathed in winter flood,
And through the land the wholesome reign of frost.
Bright shines each star in heaven to-night ; o'er all
The moon in icy splendour rides a queen !

The muffled bells are ringing out the year :
The old year—only one year old—is doomed !
Ah ! changeful bells, but yesternight, it seems,
You welcomed him with joy, as in one hour

You'll shout in welcome to the glad new year ;
Scarce glad perhaps could he foresee how soon
You will be ready to proclaim his death,
And peal in mirth to greet a fresh new year !

The three friends listen ; little speech to-night.
These three, in early days ' Triumvirate '
Named by their sisters, though on different paths
Moving, had fed the friendship formed when boys,
And kept aglow its warm flame in their hearts.
Then later came that other, who had grown
So dear to each, as all were dear to him,
But dearest was the host.

Now when the bells
Changed to a peal of laughter, and the tower
Shook with their merriment, the hearts of all
Grew warmer with the warm libations quaffed ;
And then a toast was given—the only one—
' To his dear memory.'

For a while the gloom
Fell once again upon the spirits of all.
Then slowly rising, laying down his pipe,
The host unlocked his desk, thence took a roll
Of papers: 'These,' he said, 'I found to-day
By accident; they are the work of him
Who is not here to-night, and by the date
I see he wrote part in the summer-time:
When July grew to August he was here.
And at that time he often spoke to me
Of her to whom he wrote; I saw them once
Together; all the hills were fringed with light,
And through the woods, and on the stream it fell.'

Then pressed those other two to hear them read,
And 'Read them out,' they cried; but his voice
shook
Awhile with feelings that they partly shared.
At length, 'It is no breach of faith, for we

All knew him : and I think if his dear lips
Could frame an answer to our strong desire,
'Twould be to grant it. We will read in turn.'
And they assented, saying, 'You begin.'

I.

I write not in unbroken strain,
I throw my fancies to the wind,
I dare to tell my inmost mind
To sea and mountain, storm and rain.

And through them all I speak to thee,
For in them all I see, my queen,
Thy grace and beauty, though unseen
Thy face and form must ever be.

II.

I thought I held a certain cure
For all the stinging shafts of love :
I trusted not the powers above,
I deemed my own specific sure.

And as I wandered through the crowd,
And in and out the motley throng
With many a laugh, and many a song
I said my say, and sighed, and vowed :

And laughed to find my heart was whole,
And doubted love's asserted power :
Thought only of the passing hour,
And never faced the nearing goal.

Came one fair morning ; you and I
Lay on the river's glittering breast ;
In your deep eyes my own found rest
And all the tide of Life ran high.

And my safe cure ? nay, taunt me not,
God knows I bear a bitter load,
The journey long and dark the road,
No smile to cheer my sunless lot.

III.

The heavens are weeping bitter tears,
The angry storm-clouds frown and scowl,
The moaning winds with anguish howl,
The night drags like a load of years.

This morning when I left your side
The sun rode high in kingly state,
And smiled alike on small and great
And glowed as with a monarch's pride.

This morning when I touched your hand,
And caught the marvel of your eyes,
And saw your bright breast fall and rise,
I felt the mighty master's wand.

My soul is heavy now with pain,
My fate is black with horrid fears,
The hours will pass like weighted years,
For we may never meet again.

IV.

I live on morsels from thy hand,
My life is but from day to day,
I ask one hour and watch and pray
And look toward the silent land.

O land of silence eloquent,
Where each unuttered thought is known,
Where truth depends not on a tone,
To thee my wayward steps are bent.

The sailor seeks his native strand,
And I will look toward thy shore,
And bless thee ever more and more,
And firmly trust thee, silent land.

For alway, tho' with varying power,
Through light and shade, through cloud and shine,
A pure ray falls along the line
That leads toward thy refuge tower.

Oh for one arm to lean on mine,
That we might win that narrow road,
Together reach that sweet abode
Where human love grows all divine.

V.

I knew two beings of human clay
Who held some likeness to their God,
Who never in the world's path trod :
They seemed to know a surer way.

The great world staggered to and fro,
But on each other's arm they leant,
And so through all the world they went ;
The green trees bent and whispered low.

They caught their password from the trees,
They read it in the glancing wood,
They heard it in the roaring flood,
It sounded in the plunging seas.

The great world flared and flitted by :
It thought to hold them by its glare,
They met it with a wondering stare,
And passed it with half-curious eye.

And so they kept an even mind,
And heard at length the deep sea sound,
And climbed the vessel, outward-bound,
And left the port, nor looked behind.

VI.

I strive to lift my thoughts from self,
A broken idol—let it rot:
Why waste the hours to curse my lot—
A dusty volume on the shelf?

A volume that perchance a hand
Of matchless beauty, in some day
Of listlessness, may steal away
And almost wish to understand.

O lady, if your clear deep eyes
Should ever thread that misty lore,
I promise you an honest store
That you could scarcely all despise.

But what care you for books like these?
Enough for you is Nature's page,
She has her tales for every age,
And you can read them as you please.

VII.

I glory in the growing hours,
I love to see the lengthening days,
I joy to hear the hymn of praise
That Nature sings to higher powers.

I laugh to hear the bright air ring
With falling axe, or winding horn ;
I rush to meet the dewy morn,
And drink the freshness of the Spring.

There is no season in the year,
(At least we'll think so while it lasts)
That such an airy lightness casts
Upon the burdens that we bear.

The leaves, the shrubs, the fruits, the flowers,
The bloom, the blossoms, corn, grass, trees ;
The lakes, streams, torrents, fountains, seas :
The meadows, lawns, hills, vales, and bowers :

The sun, the moon, the stars, the sky ;
The cloud, the thunder, rain, wind, hail ;
The bee, the dove, the nightingale,
The cuckoo, glow-worm, dragon-fly :

These, one and all, true friends I call,
Enduring as His love, Who made
From troubled chaos light and shade :
Unchanging when the dark hours fall.

And so, when weary in the fight,
I turn with never failing faith
To these : and find no shadowy wraith,
But very essence of delight.

O Love and Life ! O Friendships bold !
That ye could be as firm and free
As rock or mountain, stream or tree,
Nor turn to steel in search of gold !

VIII.

From day to day I toil along,
I spend some happy hours in each,
With two dear friends, who never preach
Your moral maxims hard and strong.

A sketch that you once gave to me,
And painted with your own fair hand :
To me a glimpse of fairy-land,
Because I trod that scene with thee.

A likeness of a face divine,
By nature's finger magical :
Though priceless the original,
This copy may at least be mine.

IX.

I would I dared to speak to thee
As with thy picture I converse ;
Too often to believe a curse
May spring from sweetest scented tree.

I often think the crime is great
When we forget the iron rule,
Which teaches us that we must school
Our souls to every twist of fate.

Is the head wise which rules the heart ?
Is recollection always pain
Of things which may not be again,
And yet from hidden corners start ?

For when the sun is bright on high,
And purple roses dye the morn,
And thoughts of rain are met with scorn,
To days far off my fancies fly :

To hours passed in a little life
On emerald paths in woods embraced,
When from my crowded soul I chased
All memories of the outer strife.

Again, when flames from moors arise,
When reckless showers without a rest
Fall on an ocean's thankless breast,
While herdsmen pray for lowering skies,

A memory travels through my brain—
I joy to think no idle dream—
Of cloudless sky, and sunlit stream,
Of eyes that flash and fall again :

Madonna like ! O wondrous light !
One flash it may be for a life :
Enough to close the earnest strife,
And turn the battle for the right.

Yet once again at close of even,
 Upon the waters yet once more,
 I catch the music of the oar:
Its diamonds tie with stars in heaven.

Whose face is mirrored on the tide?
 I worship, though it mock my fault:
 My soul is made a living vault
Through which that face shall never glide.

What wonder then if my great love,
 Which would have made my heart thy throne,
 All unrequited turn to stone,
Place hope beneath, write fate above?

X.

The bright moon hides behind a hill :

Now happy lovers fondly dream,

A white mist rolls along the stream,

My star is set, my music still.

My sweet moon hides her darling face,

Concealed by many a driving cloud :

A thousand stars reliant, proud,

Attempt in vain to fill her place !

XI.

To-day the sky is black with clouds :
Are two days in our lives the same ?
Come different joys with change of name ?
Do they work ill who weave our shrouds ?

Now all around me stirs the world,
And men are pushing on to fame :
I cannot move : my heart is lame :
My vessel rides : her flag is furled.

One voiceless joy will yet remain—
The fancy how things might have been—
The power of wealth will buy a queen ;
Is wealth the power which love will gain ?

Bright vision of one hurrying hour !
That would, or could, not stay with me,
Thankful I hold that glimpse of thee ;
Thankless I curse my lack of power.

XII.

All earth holds but one charm for me :
And that, I know, can ne'er be mine :
Shut from me is the light divine,
That radiates, bright gem, from thee.

Too well I know a jewel so fair
Must only in pure gold be set ;
And shall I wish we had not met ?
From life its fairest blossom tear ?

XIII.

In vain lament and foolish grief
I look upon the rising sun :
Oh, every hour the sands will run,
More yellow grow the changing leaf.

In foolish grief and vain lament
I watch the setting of the sun :
I say, another day is done—
Weak hours in selfish pain mis-spent.

Some bid me trust a future sky !
They say, 'when some few years have sped :'
But whose the power to kill the dead—
The deadly life that will not die?

XIV.

You gave me once a blushing rose,
Because it pleased your passing whim :
But whether given to him, or him,
If questioned now, 'Heaven only knows.'

'Tis dead : its bloom has passed away :
Dry, as the springs within my heart :
But still, poor flower, we must not part,
We shared some hours that would not stay.

From your soft eye the light may fly,
The colour fade from your fair cheek,
Part not your darling lips to speak,
But my strong love can never die !

XV.

Whence comes the food that nurtures love?
The fuel that makes its flame burn bright?
And feeds its ever-quenchless light,
Undying as the stars above?

Oh on how little love will live!
One heavenly smile, one magic line,
A single touch, a glance divine:
How one of these will make it thrive.

Love! mighty master! thine the art
That gilds with secret alchemy,
And moulds to please the longing eye,
The meanest feature, dullest heart.

There are who say that we create
The being that we fain would find,
Enshrine it in a human mind,
And worship what we there instate:

Did on our planet ever dwell

The woman who was what she seemed

To him who loved, some say who dreamed?

I would not care to break the spell.

My darling, though the mind will fight

To find the fruit of reason's seed,

Believe not that I hold the creed

Which reason teaches is the right.

I lay my reason at thy feet,

Where I have cast my heart and soul ;

If love be love it gives the whole,

And knows no stinted bound or mete !

XVI.

At least I have a friend in thee,
 (I ask not if it be thy will)
 To turn aside all shafts of ill
Aimed at thy imaged purity.

It cannot be that I should err,
 With thy dear memory at my side,
 Without at least one honest guide
To tell the loss that I incur.

It cannot be that gaudy show
 Should stir the ill that lurks within,
 When each imagined, fancied sin
Must make the space between us grow.

It cannot be that I should stray
 In search of pleasure's dismal gifts,
 When each remembrance of thee lifts
My life to a serener day.

It cannot be that to thy home,
Which my heart is, (against thy will
It may be, but thy dwelling still)
The evil angels dare to come.

Ah yes ! thou art indeed my friend,
And ever must be : though so far
And silent, not less true the star
On which my fate must aye depend !

XVII.

When earth is black, and winds are high,
And scowling clouds, unwilling driven
Across the maskèd face of heaven,
Drown every star that lights the sky :

When lightnings scorch, and torrents fall,
And thunders to the storm-god roar,
And whirlwinds ride across the moor,
And all the powers of Nature call :

'Tis then I feel a glorious spell,
That lifts me o'er the bounds of space,
And brings me to thee, face to face,
And thou art near, and all is well !

XVIII.

But thou hast many by thy side—

(I know not if you call them friends)

Enough to flatter : if one lends

A tongue to truth, make that your guide.

O rare advice ! so likely too

That you would take advice from me :

You call it somewhat else ? maybe :

I care not for the name, but you.

But thou hast friends both firm and fair :

A sister's, and a brother's love,

A father's too, and His above :

Poor child, thou hast no mother's care.

XIX.

O mother mine, that passed away
Before I entered on the strife,
Or felt the full strong pulse of life,
Be near me in this later day !

O mother mine, I scarcely dare
To call thee thus : I know thy place
Before the loving Master's face,
Thou art my mother even there !

O mother, mother, scarcely known,
And never loved, as I could now
With manhood's lines upon my brow :
Yet my own mother—still my own !

This little day will soon be past :
And we beneath one cross will sleep :
I pray the Shepherd of the sheep
To bring me to thy side at last !

XX.

As often as I strain my sight
To watch the ever lessening sail,
That runs before the rising gale
When clouds drive fast and stars are bright,

I feel that there must be a shore
Beyond the beating of the wave,
Beyond the silence of the grave,
Where they who meet will part no more.

And I can trust that distant land
That lies beyond the boundless sea ;
The first step in Eternity
Must be upon that far-off strand.

XXI.

The leaves of spring in autumn fall :

Why do the seasons never stay ?

Why do the scented flowers decay ?

Is change so good for one and all ?

The sun-scorched leaves for rain-drops call :

The storm-tossed sailor sighs for home :

The night-watch prays that morn may come,

And change is good for one and all !

XXII.

I stand upon the vessel's bow:
Alone I rove in search of change,
If in fair Nature's varying range
I may find that it is enow:

But they who rush across the sea
Distraught with grief and lassitude,
With every noble aim subdued,
Change but the glistening canopy.*

The worm that gnaws into the heart,
The undying thirst for one desire,
The 'but once kindled quenchless' fire,
These mock us when we cry 'depart!'

* *Coelum, non animum, mutant, qui trans mare currunt.*

HOR. Ep. I. II, 27.

And ever, when we strive to shake
From life's fair tree the hated fruit
Of pride or passion, we o'ershoot
The limit of our strength, and make

The chains in which we groan more tight :
Our foes insatiate close around ;
More hard their gripe, the hissing sound
Tells snakelike how they use their might !

XXIII.

But now I stand upon the bow
And look upon the deep, deep sea :
My spirit rises glad and free
And leaps before the carven prow.

Oh earth is fair as fair can be,
And if it show the fruit of sin
The root itself lies deep within
Ourselves: thence grows the upas tree.

Were man as open and as pure
As lake or ocean, sky or field,
What we call sin would cease to wield
The hideous power that baffles cure.

There does not lie in God's own art—
Which nature is—one seed of ill ;
The foul disease beyond our skill
Springs only from the human heart.

I loathe the ungracious lips that feast
Upon 'the world's great wickedness :'
Think you the diamond's worth is less
If flashing on a harlot's breast?

The flowers around, the stars above,
Are worth a thousand tongues of flame :
More eloquently they proclaim
The glorious Gospel, 'God is love !'

XXIV.

The dusky raiment of the night
Falls fast upon the vessel's side,
The cold chaste mistress of the tide
Half gives and half recalls her light.

Now stirs within my troubled breast
The mighty power of memory,
That with resistless energy
Brings back the past : and will not rest

But travels through my course of years
From boyhood's early day of grace,
Until the hour I saw your face:
I almost drown that hour in tears.

For ever since my life has been
Changed, and old joys have died away,
A new strong power has held full sway,
The forms I loved have fled the scene.

About the corners of my heart,
O love, your life is woven fast:
No hours can kill the conscious past,
We may not meet, we cannot part!

Good night! the moon sinks in the sea
I do not heed the minutes' rush:
Around me is a sacred hush,
And all my spirit flies to thee!

XXV.

A flush upon the waters east !

A flush upon the waters west !

A thousand scarlet shafts at rest
Upon the ocean's glowing breast !

A giant rises from the sea

Dripping with light ; in lofty pride

He showers his gifts on every side,
' My world must not discredit me.'

And it is day : all is the same,

Yet changed ; the colourless cold tint

Has grown to light and warmth ; a mint
Of golden galleons flash and flame !

XXVI.

A shout ! we near the foreign soil
That all around have wished to gain,
In search of health, or flight from pain,
To drown remorse, or rest from toil.

We stand upon a foreign shore.
O joy inconstant ! constant grief !
The pain, from which I sought relief,
Grows on me ever more and more.

And as between us grows the space,
The closer does thy image cling
About my heart ; I cannot fling
The cherished idol from its place.

O Mother Nature, hear me swear—
(Thou art my Mother, Goddess, Queen ;
I would that thou hadst always been,
That I had served no other fair)—

Dear Nature, thus I swear to thee—
That I henceforth am thine alone,
Thy slave, dependant: thee I own
As sovereign of my destiny.

And I can trust thee, mistress mine,
And worship in my perfect trust,
And let all petty passions rust,
And feel my being merge in thine.

Thou art yet more—companion, guide;
And while I bow with reverent awe,
I feel a growing concord draw
My faint heart to thy sheltering side.

Nature I laud ; her service take ?
My darling, thou art Nature's child ;
Thine her fresh face, and accents wild ;
So I must love thee for her sake !

XXVII.

I see you now, though far away,
As in the distant happy days ;
The centre of admiring gaze,
While all their willing homage pay.

O curst sweet fruit I cannot taste ;
I see you smile, for me no glance ;
I see you flutter in the dance ;
Then wither, arm that clasps your waist !

No joy below, no hope above,
My heart breaks while they lisp and prate ;
And thou hast taught me how to hate,
Who lately taught me how to love.

Blow winds ! flash lightnings ! storm-clouds pour !
I wish to heaven the gilded room
The horrid fashion would assume
Of some tossed barque on ocean's floor.

I would that we stood on the deck
 With all the fools who flatter now ;
 Cold drops would start upon your brow
As each huge billow strained the wreck.

My own hand, in that dreadful day,
 Should thrust into the foaming wave
 Whoever sought your life to save,
If any dared the task essay.

My arm alone from out the deep
 Should snatch your darling, shrinking form,
 Or, if no power could mate the storm,
We'd pass together to our sleep.

And is this cruel ? yet you can smile
 While my crushed heart is torn with pain ;
 And while old memories rack my brain,
New toys your easy hours beguile.

I half believe the poet's word
That 'woman is the lesser man,'
Half hope it, for the frightful ban
Of slighted love snaps life's frail cord.

Then be it thus, maybe 'tis well.
If woman knew the full fierce strife
Of Love, she scarce could hold to life
And reason under such a hell!

XXVIII.

Cold Death, the air has grown to ice ;
Thy hand is moving in the dark,
And ever as it sets its mark,
The crazy death-sign screeches thrice.

Cold Death, strange noises fill the air ;
Thy hand is moving, even now
I think I feel it on my brow ;
Not all unkind it presses there.

Thou speakest ? for I feel a rush
Between thy lips of winter's breath,
A numbing coldness strikes me, Death ;
I fear the long unbroken hush.

At length, 'What charm hath life for thee ?
Thou art despised, and sad, and poor ;
Wilt thou not enter ?—lo ! the door
Of perfect rest ! I hold the key.'

Cold Death, no more ! I hear a strain
Of angel-music in the air,
And voices sweet, and faces fair
Are near ; and I am free again.

Fie ! greedy Death, why didst thou come
Too soon, in specious garb : false friend,
I wait until my lord shall send
The summons that will call me home.

XXIX.

Sweet Heaven! I look upon thy bliss,
And sometimes think it half a jest
That thou, so perfect in thy rest,
Shouldst shelter such a world as this.

A world of storm and tempest strife—
A mass of little jealousies—
A cloud of hollow mockeries—
A broken and uneven life.

Anon I see a mask of black
Creep over thy celestial face,
And angry clouds each other chase,
With lightning-guides to mark the track.

Oh then if storms can frown on thee,
And dare assault thy brow serene,
What marvel there should grow between
This world and thee some sympathy?

XXX.

I think we own two spirit-lives :

 The outer shell, that all can see,

 The kernel, which, whate'er it be,

No token to the great world gives.

And though the body chain the shell,

 And hold it in some narrow strait,

 That other mocks the prison-gate

And bids its captive mate farewell.

Or is it that of these lives twain

 One does not lie in our control,

 But falls beneath a stranger soul

And shares its captor's joy and pain ?

I cannot answer, this I know—

 Where'er I go, in shine or storm,

 You pass with me, while yet your form

Has never crossed the ridge of snow !

XXXI.

But sense is strong; and far more dear
The set and vacant weather-phrase
From your red lips, than phantom lays
That ring for ever in my ear.

And flesh is warm; and far more sweet
The pressure of one glowing hand,
Than those cold spirit-limbs that stand
So near me in the busy street.

And often to your spirit I say,
‘O Sweet, I would your other part
Were here, that your dear human heart
Might beat upon my breast to-day.’

XXXII.

By trees that stagger with their fruit,
By slopes that lie in endless sun,
Where streams through pleasant vineyards run,
And silver-threaded torrents shoot

From hills all wrapt in corn and vines,
I pass : as through a fairy realm
Where Beauty seems to take the helm,
And Time glides by on smoother lines :

Through lazy lands where wondrous shades
And lights of crimson-tinted blue
Shake over hills, whose emerald dew
Beneath the earliest sun-flake fades :

Where day is glorious, but the night
Most lovely : each distinctive star
Hangs clear, and severed from the far
Blue vault—a belt of diamond light !

XXXIII.

I wander through those isles of bliss
That lie on Maggiore's breast,
And drink their perfumed air, and rest
Where northern pines and palm-trees kiss ;

And o'er the dreamy lake I pass,
By many a village perched on high,
And many a church, whose turrets lie
Reflected in this sea of glass :

And on, until I reach the gate
Of that fair city, whence a shrine
Of workmanship almost divine
Uplifts to heaven its pillared state.

XXXIV.

I pass beneath the western door,
And enter the stupendous pile,
Pace the grand nave and each deep aisle,
And, falling on the marble floor,

Kneel low before the altar high,
And, lost in the immensity
Of arch and shaft and canopy,
In voiceless adoration cry

To Him, whose Church has stood the shocks
That buried nations in decay,
And scattered crowns, like jets of spray
When rollers charge the opposing rocks.

Proportion perfect as immense—
Three windows in the eastern wall—
Three gorgeous windows crowning all
With fulness of magnificence.

Beneath the moon, a silver fire,
Two hundred peaks of marble shine,
Two hundred rays of light divine
Fall on the saints that crown each spire.

At early morn again I go,
And reach the duomo's highest height,
And feast again the insatiate sight—
Two hundred towers of gleaming snow !

XXXV.

And who are these from yonder shore
That ride o'er Como's heaving lake
All clothed in white array, and make
Towards us ever more and more ?

I hear in heaven a brave salute
From armies hidden in the cloud,
But ere I catch their thunders loud
I see the flash of cannon shoot

From parks of field artillery,
And, singeing the eternal snow,
Pass heedless o'er the world below,
Bent on some dreadful mystery !

But who are these that ride so fast
Midst thunder, lightning, wind, and rain ?
White-crested steeds that scour the plain
With brazen peal and trumpet blast !

XXXVI.

But most I longed to clasp your hands
 Beneath San Marco's glorious dome,
 The pride of Venice, and the home
Of tribute wealth from subject lands.

I have no words to sing its praise :
 My fancies are but half my own .
 E'en here I often stand alone
Upon the wreck of other days.

O Love, thy name has been my song
 On Lido's sands, on Garda's shore,
 And where the avalanches roar,
And where the swift Rhine rolls along.

XXXVII.

Fall of the Rhine ! o'er every soul—
When first is heard thy thunder hoarse—
When first is seen thy frightful course—
What rapturous emotions roll !

And step by step as we draw near
Thy presence more commanding grows,
And fascinates the brain, and shows
The fatal beauty thou canst wear.

Barred only by a tottering rail
From thy deep hell, and drowned in spray,
I feel each member torn away,
And thrashed to foam-flakes with thy flail !

XXXVIII.

The months seem decades since I stood
Here, in the summer of your face :
I scarce can fancy this the place
Whence I have passed in brighter mood.

Yet I am here : but where art thou ?
Beside the hungry winter sea ?
And farther, or as far, from me
As when I stood on Scheideck's brow.

I cannot rest in this dark town
Where man treads on his fellow's heel,
And all before one altar kneel,
And worship where I fall not down.

I know no creed that they will say,
I have no wish that they can share,
They have no crown that I would wear,
They know no prayer that I can pray.

XXXIX.

Yet, darling, for your own sweet sake
I would that I could leap to fame,
And by one marvel win a name
That even you might care to take.

And gold were sweet if it could start
One love-look from your earnest eye :
And wealth were blest if it could buy
One beat of your untainted heart !

XL.

To-night I sleep beneath the roof

Where thou hast been in earlier days :

Does thy true spirit haunt old ways,
From which thy features stand aloof?

A lonely house, a house of woe,

I wander on from room to room :

On every wall I read my doom,
I see my fate where'er I go.

Upon each step thy foot hath been,

A melancholy music breaks :

From each forgotten stairway shakes
The blossom of a brighter scene.

Sweet life, your hand has turned the latch

That opens to me at this hour :

Where thou hast knelt I stand and pour
A grief thine ear will never catch.

All day thy voice has vexed the air :
I caught it in the thoughtless throng,
And heard it 'midst the jest and song ;
To-night I asked, ' O sweet and fair : '

One sang it, and I turned the leaf ;
The rests and minims lost their place ;
I only saw your pale, pale face,
And missed the notes in hidden grief.

Comes night : and will thy spirit come ?
Oh ! vain for me the hope of sleep ;
My pulses quicken, my nerves creep,
For here was once thy passing home.

Thy face moves on the bare blank wall,
The dull cold wall that changes not,
But throws one shadow on this spot—
The shadow of a shroud and pall.

Upon the window, whence your sight
Has flown, the never-tiring rain
Accompanies the dirge of pain
That my dark spirit sings to-night.

For happy men the dawn will break,
For eager men who grudge the night,
For lads who thirst to join the fight
Too hot to balance prize and stake.

For me the morrow but approves
A lesson learned in early days,
And taught again with scanty praise—
'Who lives serenely meanly loves.'

XLI.

Dry dust beneath the gilded dome,
Dry bones about the naked strand,
Bare skulls upon the burning sand,
A fleshless frame in every home.

A faith in life, a living faith,
A breath of life on lifeless dust,
A gleam of hope for failing trust,
A little heed to Him who saith

‘Come unto Me.’ O let us go,
Dear suffering friends who faint and fall,
With this sweet comfort for us all,
That He has wept for human woe.

XLII.

When gazing in a listless mood
 Across the waste of flood and sky,
 The patriarch saw his tender spy
Returning with an omen good,

His spirits must have risen apace
 With grateful prospect of release ;
 The throb of pain that soon must cease
Hath in itself a touch of grace !

From scented paths among the stars
 O little dove, that brings to me
 This blossom from hope's flowering tree,
I bless thee through my prison bars !

XLIII.

I think we grow as years unfold,
I trust we grow, from day to day,
To something of a nobler clay
And clearer ringing of true gold.

I think it is not wholly night ;
I trust we may not miss our mark ;
I seem to catch beyond the dark
Some little homes of steadfast light.

And honest heart in manly frame,
And strong intent in strengthened limb,
Can work with steady hand and climb
To higher lights of purer flame.

XLIV.

And do I err in this belief,
That in the world's engrossing strife
There may be lived a higher life
Than that which feeds on holy grief?

And that without a taint of gloom,
Nor separate from the human race,
But in the busy market-place,
And in the crowded pleasure-room.

A life that comes of generous thought,
And seeks in all the trace of Him
Whose image, though confused and dim,
His love on every face hath wrought.

A life abhorrent of the taste
That craves for foul suspicion's blood :
A life that strives to find the good,
Nor speaks with David in his haste !

XLV.

And in some hidden point of time,
At some far stage I see not now,
I may escape the clouds that throw
A dull cold shadow on my rhyme.

The hour may be, though yet unborn
And forming in the womb of fate,
When I with added strength may mate
And master that which makes my scorn.

And, shut for ever from thy face,
I may at last crush out despair,
Though bruised and maimed myself, and bear
Some fruit of pleasure to my race.

XLVI.

I write a hope I scarcely feel,
As yet I only feel the smart :
They tell me time will heal the heart:
Can minutes forge a heart of steel?

Unless my heart dissolve in pain,
Or weakened memory yield me balm,
I see not how the fearful calm
Of dead despair can still my brain.

But is there not a higher hope?
Alas! I cannot lift my eyes
To where, through rings of summer skies,
The paths to resignation slope.

XLVII.

Perchance, perchance, in some wild hour,
Your eyes may for one moment look
On those that such sweet poison took
From them, unconscious of its power.

I dare the moment, let it come:
You will not know you look on me,
I, wrapt in dust, shall darkly see
A mask of marble cold and dumb.

Yet think not that I plead desire,
A rebel from the tyrant Thought,
Or else what gain that I have wrought
So long, so hard, to quench its fire!

XLVIII.

I stand beneath the arch of limes.*

That I had known thee in that day!

What might have been I do not say:
Some nobler usance of those times?

What profit to renew the strife,

What profit now, when I am free,

When I have schooled myself to see
A sculpture where I dreamed a life?

Farewell, farewell, for evermore:

For evermore, sweet life, farewell!

My life is in that marble cell,
My manhood joins the battle-roar.

* In the grounds of Trinity College, Cambridge.

XLIX.

Flow, stagnant thoughts, that crowd my brain,
And clothe your nakedness in song :
Flow, burning words, that scorch my tongue,
A molten stream of blistering rain !

I strive to drown the fire of hell :
About the giddy world I walk,
And meet old friends, and stand, and talk,
And think that I am doing well.

But when the night in blackness falls,
I hear the devils laugh and roar ;
They dance with Death on a fiery shore :
I see their shadow on the walls !

L. .

Peace with the morn, the holy morn
That breaks on all the fold of Christ,
With peace that never can be priced,
Though wealth may doubt and learning scorn.

Where float the flags on tower and hall,
A peerless rain of priceless pearl,
And where from cottage chimneys curl
The thin blue wreaths : alike on all.

Peace through the world this happy morn,
Peace on the wave as on the shore,
But nearest when we kneel before
The Presence of the Virgin-born.

. LI.

I shall not see thy face this year,
I shall not catch thy darling voice ;
I hear abroad the clash and noise
Of happy boys who shout and cheer.

O glad New Year, that asks for praise
And welcome from the rich and poor,
I curse you standing at my door,
To me a very waste of days.

O Lord, forgive my wretched sin,
Forgive this weak and faithless lay,
And, with another year, to-day
Let me a higher life begin.

LII.

They name me 'fool of abject love,'
And 'serving-man to fond desire,'
'The slave of that which soon will tire,
More fickle than the April prove.'

But I remember when a boy
I could not take an aimless walk,
And later on the listless talk
Of fashion brought to me no joy.

And now, my hope and prospect gone,
Why should I strive for tinkling gain,
Why pull against the stream, and strain
For shores where I must stand alone ?

LIII.

O Death, Death, Death, how men malign
Thy visage : sweet and dear to me
The hope of life that dawns through thee
Beyond the shadow and the sign.

O Grave, the anxious world may frown
Upon the peace thou canst bestow ;
O precious source of peace, to know
Where we can lay our burdens down.

O Gate of Life, no grave of death ;
The other side, the other side,
Where sheltered craft securely ride,
Unruffled by the tempest's breath.

LIV.

Should I forerun thee in the race,
And sooner reach the nearing end
To which our daily footsteps bend
Along the line that all must trace,

Come once, O dearest, where I sleep,
When Spring is making glad the year,
When earth is bright and life is dear,
When violets blush and snow-drops weep:

And with your darling fingers twine
Around the cross a wreath of flowers,
And think one moment on the hours
When your soft voice was mixed with mine.

LV.

I nurse a ghost upon my knee,
I sing to it in doleful time,
I read to it my dismal rhyme :
It mocks me with unmeaning glee.

I take a skeleton to bed,
I hear it rattle in my sleep,
All night its fleshless fingers keep
Their hold upon my aching head.

And both are one: the ghost of hope—
The skeleton of my desire—
These will remain when hell's hot fire
Is twisted into silken rope !

LVI.

I strive and wrestle with my fate :

 I stagger in its horrid grip,

 I hear the curses on its lip,

And in its eyes I read strong hate.

At last, at last, I fling my foe,

 And for a moment seem to gain,

 With inward trembling : for the pain

Which I inflict too well I know

That I full measure shall receive,

 A treble measure by and by :

 And thus my hopes within me die—

One hour to triumph ; three to grieve !

LVII.

How long this tiring, deadly feud
With foes that I have nursed and fed?
I nourished them with daily bread
And gave them clothes, when faint and nude.

I begged some morsels from thy store
Wherewith to feed my starving friends :
And thou didst give me odds and ends.
I fed them standing at thy door.

What magic lay in each poor scrap
From thy rich board? I only know
My friends grew dainty : would forego
All meat that fell not from thy lap.

And on that food they grew so strong
That I was lost in their control :
They bound me fast both heart and soul,
And, powerless, I beheld them throng

Around thee, and with words of fire
And manner savage and uncouth
Demand that thou shouldst yield thy youth
And loveliness to their desire.

Came quick and hot thy passionate breath,
Thy neck was arched in proud disdain,
Thou bidst them not approach again
Thy presence on the pain of death.

O'erawed by thy majestic mien
I saw the wretched minions flee,
And scared by one proud glance from thee
Depart confused, in bitter spleen.

And angered thus at their disgrace
They loosed on me their rage and shame,
And vowed that I deserved the blame,
And swore to brand it on my face.

Thus in one day I lost thy light,
Which was the sun of all my life,
And found myself engulfed in strife
With those whose very glance is night.

LVIII.

As one who starting from a dream,
In which he walked with her he loves,
Looks on the vacant wall which proves
His waking moments what they seem :

As one who wandering through a maze
Explored and known years out of mind,
Looks vainly here and there to find
A token left in those far days !—

So, passing each familiar place
Where I have met your vanished glance,
I feel as wakened from a trance
Whereof I find no certain trace,

Save that deep chanting in my ear,
And that cold sadness round my heart :
Can these be parcel too and part
Of some wild dream of grief and fear ?

I vainly ask : the truth I know,
At least, the truth of that which is,
Of what shall be, I know but this,
An uphill journey, sad and slow !

LIX.

O some way up the steep incline
I catch the shadow of a hand,
And higher yet a glowing brand
Whose rays fall on the thorny line.

And there are noble hearts about
Upon this path of grief and care,
Who utter warnings here and there
And, when we stumble, call and shout.

And there are prayers we never hear
That reach the Sacred Heart above,
And turn the fountains of His love
Upon the sorrows that we bear.

LX.

Though language fails when hope decays,
I dread to write the word 'farewell :'
Yet must it be so : and the spell,
Which, while my fancy traced these lays,

Has bound thy phantom to my side,
Is breaking : and my being drifts
In currents strange, my spirit shifts
Its course to paths unknown, untried,

In mad endeavour to retain
The form which shuns it, scared and pale,
Like soft gazelle in wooded dale
That flies before the hunter's train.

LXI.

Out of the store of my great love—

My love that grows from day to day,

My love that will not pass away

Till every star is dark above—

These scattered morsels : let them be

Upon thy path, nor turn aside :

Tread them to powder—dust of pride—

The atoms of a shivered tree.

A tree which thy bright eyes have seen

Before the lightning's forked flame,

I ask not whence that lightning came,

Made ashes of its branches green !

LXII.

I cannot bare my inmost heart,
I fail to utter all I feel ;
The tiny glimpse that I reveal
Is but the shadow of a part.

The pale gashed face upon the shore,
The broken spar upon the sands,
Tell of wild prayers, and lifted hands
That never shall be lifted more.

The wreathed immortelles round the cross,
The lettered headstone clear and neat,
Prove that one faithful heart must beat
Still mindful of a deathless loss.

LXIII.

From the firm rock of my strong love—
My love that cannot pass away—
These splintered fragments ! Let them stay,
And hold them for whate'er they prove :

It is not much : you do not know
The scope of love, and never can
Until the spirit released shall scan
Those heights it cannot reach to now :

Till our unfettered spirits meet
Where all pretence shall disappear,
And, ranging in a vaster sphere,
Our hearts to grander music beat :

Where Time's defect, and Doubt's disgrace,
And Faith's frail work, and Hope's dull task,
Are lost in Sight : and each vain mask
Is torn from every flinching face :

Where Truth is seen as it appears
To Him Who is its very God,
And all the paths our spirits have trod
Show crooked through the mist of years.

• LXIV.

Bright day ! when for that fairer shore
We quit this noisy bustling port,
And all the crash of tower and fort
Is jest and scorn to ocean's roar.

Unloved we do not leave a home :*
Poor travellers from a roadside inn,
Our sweet home-life will first begin
When we have weathered ocean's foam :

Nor will the stormy passage cease
Until we sight that smiling bay,
Where all the mists are rolled away
And every wave is fringed with peace.

* 'Ex vita ita discedo tamquam ex hospitio non tamquam ex domo.'—*Cic. de Sen.* xxiii.

LXV.

‘O waste of Life’ the people cry,
And yet they praise the cities’ noise
Wherein I only catch the voice
Of sickly infants, born to die.

O waste of Love, Life’s very sun,
That once in Life’s short day will glow :
O bitter hour, in which we know
That we have slept till day is done.

And what of Life when Love has passed ?
And what of Love when that we loved
Is dead to us, or, worse, has proved
Some other than our fancies cast ?

Who gives a love that none can sell,
Sweet ! shall I write him down ‘a fool ;’
What say you to my pretty rule
‘Thrice fool who gives his faith as well ?’

O Love, that looks so passing fair,
Why hast thou sworn a feud with peace?
What hope of shelter or surcease
Until we pass the noontide glare?

Is love in life, as life in love,
A fire of all devouring flame?
For which we know but one sweet name
To curse below, to praise above !

LXVI.

And if I yet protract my lay
One moment, take this idle plea :
Perchance it may avail with thee—
The year has touched the month of May.

O month of Mary, pure and warm
And spotless as thy fair wild flowers,
For me thy slowly lengthening hours
Possess a double power to charm.

And if my lips must frame 'adieu,'
And I must close this sunless song,
And still the one remaining tongue
Through which my words can pass to you,

When better than in this sweet hour
When every sense is lulled to rest,
And from the spring's full nursing breast
The infant summer gathers power?

LXVII.

Fainter, then louder, falls and swells
Across the river and through the trees,
Above the music of the breeze,
The mellow sound of silver bells.

Glad voices near and eyes that shine ;
O, every flower is sunned to-day,
For all the clouds have passed away
And Love has triumphed : thou art mine !

Sweet flight through many a summer land,
Athwart the ridges of the world :
And round your waist my arm is curled,
And on my shoulder leans your hand.

LXVIII.

A dream ! a dream ! Then let me sleep
For ever : nor awake at last
To find the golden fancy past,
And all my life a starless deep.

O Thou, the Bright and Morning Star !
Touch our dark eyes with Thy soft light
That they may blossom into sight
Of that high Life which is afar ;

Whereof as yet we only trace
A reflex in the work of Spring,
And those mysterious worlds that sing
Thy praise through all the aisles of space.

MISCELLANEOUS.

TO THE RIVER AT MONKS' WALK.

I.

Softened shadows falling fast
Flash and gleam and quiver
Through the willows' drooping boughs
On the running river :

Where the guilty aspen leaves
Shake and moan and shiver,
Near the grassy bank that slopes
To the silent river.

II.

Sweetest hours I ever knew,
Kind and gracious giver,
Came, and died, upon thy breast,
Swiftly-flowing River !

She who robbed me of my heart
 (Though she prize it never)
 Found it floating on thy tide,
 Silver-shining River !

Fortune ! give me for my bow
 One shaft from thy quiver,
 That shall reach her careless heart
 Sailing down Life's river.

Life's false stream I cannot trust,
 Shifting, changing ever :
 Worth its hollow joys one hour
 On thy wave, dear River !

III.

Saintly spirit, passing on
 Through the deep for ever,
 Cheer me with one kindly smile
 Toiling on Life's river.'

Hard to pull against its stream,
Harder still to sever
Truth from all the bright hopes dream'd
On Life's fickle river.

In its treacherous bed there sleeps
Many a reckless diver,
Who in search of fancied wealth
Scoured Life's fatal river.

IV.

Placid stream, to thee I turn,
Sick of Life's vain fever :
Folded in thy still embrace
Let me drift for ever.

CONTRAST.

I.

Filled with sweet thoughts of home he passed along,
 With rod and fly beside the twisting stream,
 A happy man from town and office freed :
 And not till twilight draped the fields in dusk
 Sought he his lodging near the pleasant wood.

A message for him, flashed along the wire :
 His wife flung down by fever moaned his name :
 Six hours to pass 'ere he could reach her side.

Pass, wretched hours !

In darkness running out :

Dark hours of inmost misery and doubt,
 Oh not so slowly, not so slowly run.

Ah wretched hours, my doubt

May grow to truth still harder to be borne,
 Yet not so slowly lest the lamp go out—

The flickering flame die out—

Ere I return.

II.

A happy lover in a country town,
With half a dozen unexpected hours
Thrown to him on a laughing April day :
His grandfather, 'Tell John to seal this note,
And see it posted : then be off : and mind,
To-morrow morning, half-past nine : good bye.'

A ride of twenty minutes through the lanes,
And on his shoulder lies a small warm hand.

Stay, happy hours !
O rays of golden light,
And do ye tire so soon of flowers so bright ?
Nor care ye for the nightingale's sweet song ?
Fear not the dismal night ;
Sweet hours, pass not so hurriedly along :
Can ye not stay, and dazzle with your light
The dusky queen of night
And her dark throng ?

ISABEL IN DREAMLAND.

I dreamed that I walked through a fairy haunt
In a beautiful emerald bower,
Where the bright birds sing, and the waters laugh
As they flow by many a flower.

Oh ! how fresh and sweet grow the fair wild flowers
Where the shimmering waters run,
And green mosses sparkle with drops of dew,
And gay pebbles flash in the sun.

The frail wild roses with soft sunny smiles
Peep out from the sweet briar trees :
The may from the depth of her snow-white breast
Sighs her soul to the perfumed breeze.

And the hare-bell weeps, and the blue-bell shakes,
As they turn their faces away,
For the Isabel, their own virgin queen,
Is ten times as beauteous as they !

Soft ! she sleeps, fair flower, on a mossy bank ;
And her dreams are blissful I ween,
For an angel smile creeps over her face
Like sunlight o'er landscapes at e'en.

And I catch her name from the happy birds
Who call it aloud in their song,
And sauntering breezes whisper the word
To streams as they hurry along.

When the kingly sun for three hours has marched
On this smiling morning in May,
The birds sing yet louder, the streams stand still,
For they know who was born to-day.

And they crown their own fairy queen with flowers
As they summon her from her dream,
And they bathe her brow with the sparkling dew
And her feet in the joyful stream.

O bright sunny moments of passing bliss,
O joyous brief vision of light,
Why must ye away for the dreamless day
To flood the soft shadows of night?

A LAMENT.

O Christ! that Thy dear name should be
The battle-ground of hostile sects,
Of whom each in all else detects
A want of Catholicity.

So thousands fall on every side
Each day, who never heard thy name,
And hell's swift agents feed the flame
That springs from Thy mock followers' pride.

To be a Christian does not mean,
In these unhappy days of strife,
To live and teach a Christ-like life,
The fruit is hid in branches green.

Oh! for a fountain from above,
Like floods of rain in tropic seas,
To drown these fatal rivalries
And draw us to Thy perfect love.

We can but bow before Thy will,
And own It orders all things well,
And crush those seeds of pride that swell
Within our hearts, and work our ill.

Dear Master, teach us how to wait
Until it be Thy will to come
And lead Thy wayward children home,
Secure within the golden gate!

SONG: 'O HEARTS THAT FAIL.'

She sat by my side in the old brave boat,
And the glad sea laughed as we left the shore,
And the tide ran under a rising moon,
And diamonds fell from the lifted oar.

O island of shade in the summer sea,
O night of repose in a world of strife,
O happy moments that floated away
On the breast of the eddying stream of life.

When I sailed last night to our fairy isle
The moonlight fell on the harbour bar,
But the mist in my eyes was a cloudy veil
That darkened the beauty of moon and star.

O hearts that fail in a painless waste,
Have the stars of our God no light for you?
If you cannot gaze on the vault of heaven,
Look down on the wave and its worlds of blue!

O stately and queenly sweet Form of Light,
That shone on my face as I gained the strand,
You brought me a flowering blossom of hope
That conquered despair and its threatening hand:

Though I lose you now on this fair bright earth
I know that you bloom in a fairer field;
So the tears shall cease, and the sigh shall pass,
And the stubborn grief shall be made to yield.

O hearts that fail in a painless waste,
Have the stars of our God no light for you?
If you cannot gaze on the vault of heaven,
Look down on the wave and its worlds of blue!

MARCUS CURTIUS LACUS.

A SCHOOL EXERCISE.

(AFTER MACAULAY.)

I.

In the days of ancient history—
In the days of ancient Rome—
A deed was done which still is sung
In many a cottage home.
The name of Marcus Curtius
To Romans still is dear :
His story never failed to please
A Roman's ready ear.

II.

Full well he loved his country's gods,
Full well his father's home,
And well he loved to look upon
The glorious towers of Rome :

And well he loved, with eager ear,
To catch each burning word
Of tales of warlike prowess done
By many a Roman sword.

III.

He knew the tale of Manlius,
Who killed the furious Gaul,
And joyfully had risked his life
To answer duty's call.
Oft heard he how Horatius
Alone the bridge had kept,
And often in the Forum gazed,
Where now his ashes slept.
Oft spake he of the Horatii,
Whose fame shall ne'er expire ;
And oft of noble Mutius,
Who felt the Tuscan fire.

Of Brutus too he loved to hear,
Who set his country free
From cursed Tarquin's cruel yoke
Of galling tyranny.

IV.

Then through his veins a burning fire
Of proud ambition ran :
And he would emulate their fame,
Stand with them in the van.
And if e'er again his country
Should come to such dire need,
He vowed that he would give his life,
And for her welfare bleed.

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V.

Now there opened in the Forum
A chasm, from whose brink,
In blank dismay and deadly fear,
The stoutest heart might shrink.

The augurs with one voice declare,
While fear each breast appals,
'The gaping pit will never close
Till Rome her choicest offering throws
Within its horrid walls.'

VI.

The commons press around the spot
From early morn to night :
The fathers look with reverent awe
Upon the wondrous sight :
But, hark ! along the crowd is heard
A murmur of surprise,
As right and left the throng falls back,
Like the Red Sea's divided track,
And lifted are all eyes
To where, the eager ranks between,
Mounted upon a noble steed,
That never failed in hour of need,
A Roman knight is seen.

VII.

In accents firm the Roman speaks :

‘ What prize can be more dear

Than one who will give up his life

Without remorse or fear :

Who will yield it for his country,

His native land to save,

And after death to mingle

With the glorious and the brave ;

With those who in all ages

For their country’s good have died,

And after death have ever been

Their country’s chiefest pride ?

Great Gods above, and men below,

Bear witness all, I pray,

With what delight I give my life

To succour Rome this day !’

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VIII.

No other words he uttered,
 No sigh escaped his breast ;
His armour fast was girded on
And bright his crested helmet shone,
 He held his spear at rest.
He gazed upon the Forum wide
 Thronged with an eager crowd,
That to and fro impatient swayed,
With upturned eyes and voices laid,
As when the last sad words are said,
 And whispers seem too loud.

IX.

Then turned he to the chasm deep ;
 With fire his eye was lit ;
He loosed the rein, he spurred the steed
That never failed in hour of need,
And, plunging on at headlong speed,
 Sank in the fatal pit.

X.

The chasm broad closed o'er him :
It was a stirring sight,
The fathers waved their hoary hands
And cheered with all their might :
The children clapped their little palms,
The maidens joyous sang ;
The halls and cottages of Rome
With exultation rang.

XI

O Romans, happy Romans !
In having such a son
As Marcus Curtius Lacus,
By whom the deed was done.
Before his day and after
Brave deeds have oft been sung,
And oft the seven hills of Rome,
And the swift Tiber's yellow foam,
With joyful shouts have rung ;

But ne'er, I ween, did Roman
More boldly meet his fate
Than Marcus Curtius Lacus
In early times or late.

TO LALISE.

Child, we never should have met :
Fate has dealt an aimless blow,
Which has chanced upon my heart,
Kindling love that dares not glow ;
Bitter hours and useless tears,
Shadows that will never pass,
All the brightness of the world
Shattered like a broken glass.
You to me must ever be
More than I can e'er express,
For 'twere madness to declare
That which you must never guess !

I to you a friend will seem
Through the burning days of youth ;

So rehearse and play my part
That no eye shall mark the truth.
Yet my fancies often frame
All the joy which might have been,
And I paint with golden hues
All the glory of the scene,
Where, beneath Italian skies,
Might have passed our even lives—
Folly ! more than words can tell,
Scarcely more than love forgives.

I through all the changing years
On a tideless shore shall stand ;
What to me the spring or fall
Of the golden-berried land ?

BEHIND THE VEIL.

There are times when our God seems away,
With a mask on the face of His sun ;
There are hours when the infidels cry,
‘The Lord doth not see what is done.’

We have been in the depths of the sea,
We have mixed in the yeast of the waves,
We have stood in the places of tombs—
At the open mouths of the graves.

All indented the crowns of the strong,
With the stroke of the hammer and axe ;
All the joints of their harness are loose,
Their bucklers have melted like wax.

We have fled all unclad through the woods,
We have piercèd our feet with the briar,
We have felt the hot breath of the fiends—
A furnace of brimstone and fire !

The mighty have tangled their feet
In the desolate paths of the wood,
They have fallèn abroad in their haste,
The dry leaves are red with their blood.

Is our faith but the scope of the eye ?
And our strength as of giants who smite ?
Is a strong arm the lord of the day,
And a taper queen of the night ?

Do we think that our God is away
With a mask on the face of His sun ?
Does He hear the glad infidels cry,
' The Lord doth not see what is done ? '

TO —.

To say that thou canst fascinate and charm
Would be to tell thee what thyself hast proved
(Who know thee well, too well have learned that truth) ;
But if the power be also thine at will
To assume ungraciousness, disgust, repel,
Like one who plays a most unsuited part—
Oh, why in mercy didst not take it up
When we first met, and I was drawn at once
By an attraction irresistible—
A magnet hidden in thy glowing breast—
To thee my life, soul of my soul, to thee ?

Had I been great or wise, or honest, good,
Or truly noble, quite above my peers.

I had, seeing my hopelessness, o'ercome,
Or rather shirked to match my weapons with,
This mighty and most binding power of love.

But being merely human, mortal-like
I drank the deepest draughts that I could drain
From that delicious cup, which thou didst hold :
Said I, ' While lasts thy fortune, drink thy fill ! '

And if the hideous truth now haunts my soul,
Of the cup fallen on the floor, the draught
Expended, the dear hurrying moments gone
When I might gaze on thy loved face, and taste
The mellow words which fell from thy ripe lips,
And look—O Heaven, I know not how I looked !—
Into those deep unfathomable eyes—
The Wheel is turned, and Fortune shakes the urn.

TO A CHILD.

I.

Little girl with the golden hair,
Down where the waters dance and bubble,
When I ask you to row my boat,
Shake of the curls, and 'It's too much trouble.'
And no other words that you can spell
Could have made me like you half as well.

II.

Innocent little darling,
Whom I love, as I love to see
The dewy gems of the morning,
Or the diamonds out at sea !

Without a thought for the future,
And without a stain in the past,
If I thought that you understood me,
I'd stifle 'How long will it last?'

III.

At your time of life, my dear little maid,
You should know nothing but 'I'm not afraid ;'
So now I will take you into my boat,
And over the glittering waves we'll float,
Till the crimson light dies out in the west
And the beautiful starshine whispers 'rest.'

A REVERIE.

Years that have fought in vain with Time's stern course
(Since last I climbed this hill), like freighted craft,
Toiling against the rapids ; round your bows
Are clustered weeds and rushes from the bank.
And these some misname knowledge, and some, life ;
But they who know them best have other names
Whereby they call them : as the stately plant,
Which in our summer forest shows a queen,
Hath a more truthful and a deadlier name
In herbal books. But call them what ye will:
I would resign them for the artless faith
In which I rested twenty years ago.

O to believe, as I did then,
An universal faith in men ;

To fancy every woman pure
(’Twas then no fancy, all was sure) :
To hail good deeds with warm applause,
Nor question what their golden cause :
To kneel before a boundless law,
And worship more than what I saw :
To credit all that I was told ;
To see in all that glittered, gold :
To tread in happy innocence
The path of boyish confidence.

Yet looking forward I descry
A hope, so small because so high,
That I, as in life’s early dawn,
May wake upon some smiling morn,
And, freed from dismal fear and doubt,
May find a shining pathway out,
That leads through skies serenely bright
To our eternal Father’s light.

FROM HORACE.

ON HIS OWN POEMS.

(Hor. Car., Lib. iii. Car. 30.)

More lasting than brass, and more lofty by far
 Than Egypt's vast pyramids, huge as they are,
 A column I've reared, which the pitiless rain
 And biting north-easter again and again
 May strike in their fury, but firm will it stand
 When the breath of the tempest sweeps over the land :
 And powerless to harm it the efflux of years—
 Old Time, the Destroyer humanity fears.
 I shall not all die : my more excellent part
 Will shun the dark tomb-stone : as long as the heart
 To forms of devotion with fervour shall cling,
 So long with fresh praise will my memory ring.

Away with false grandeur, and worship of self ;
Dear Muse, I ask little of glittering pelf :
I crave but one laurel from Delphi's famed shrine
To circle my brow with the chaplet divine !

AT VENICE, IN 1869.

Venice! He hath thy praises sung
Whose verse could honour even thee,
And thou wilt guard the legacy
From venom'd spite and slanderous tongue.

Thou knowest that all he sang of thee
Was pure, and lovely, and above
The touch of hate, which, after love,
Hath rank in woman's armoury.

And we of later days owe him
A hopeless debt for lavish store
Of that imperishable ore
Which Time's dull wheel can never dim.

Could they not leave thee, sleeping bard?
These anxious guardians of fair fame,
Who soil their lips to cloud thy name,
And wound their hands to strike thee hard.

‘It is not ours to judge, far less
Condemn,’ so runs thy golden verse:
These honest judges might do worse
Than add to their own holiness.

Thy pilgrim-days have passed away,
Thy song still glows with fire divine,
And its bright glory will outshine
The wretched scandal of to-day.

My guide has been thy pilgrim-lay
On Leman’s lake, on Leman’s shore,
And where the Alpine torrents roar,
And where ‘the quick Rhone cleaves his way.’

NACH DEM RHEIN.

The hours had reached the month of June,
The air was balmy, soft and bright,
All purely shone the sweet full moon,
A million stars rained silver light.

My friend and I were outward bound,
We prayed the sun next day might shine ;
We longed to catch the deep sea sound,
And ride the waters of the Rhine :

To sail upon that sunny tide
Which flows through hills of clustering vines,
Upon whose summits far and wide
An arc of quenchless glory shines.

We went to drink the laughing wines
That sparkle in the crystal bowl :
We went to test the ripened vines
Whose merits reach from pole to pole.

We went to gaze upon the height
Where Drachenfels' lone turrets pine,
And quote upon that classic site
Childe Harold's greeting from the Rhine.

We went to drain one cup of wine
To eyes that glistened far away,
Nor grieve because the banks of Rhine
Such jet black orbs could not display.

THE SHEPHERD AND THE SEA.

FOUNDED ON A FABLE BY ÆSOP.

Upon a summer day—the lavish sun
Pouring on all a flood of living light,
And in the drowsy heavens no single cloud
Casting a shadow on the sleeping sea—
A Shepherd sat upon the sandy shore
And gazed across the silent leagues of blue.
So tranquil was the scene, so full of peace,
The angel's message seemed well nigh fulfilled.
The ripple of the wave crept up the beach,
The burning pebbles leaped to meet the wave,
The water laughed a silver note of joy :
And idly flapped the vacant sails that failed
To send the mariner upon his way,

Albeit the stately barque spread every stitch
Of canvas thus to woo the sullen air.
In rare distinctness stood the limestone cliffs
That marked the limit of the flowing tide.
O'er many a mile of down the fleecy flocks
Wandered at will to graze from morn to night,
Until the faithful tyke, being ordered thus,
Barked out the note that warned them to the fold.
In sunny nooks upon these sloping downs,
Far distant from each other, seaward built,
Stood here and there a shepherd's humble cot ;
With garden plots by wooden pales enclosed,
Where the proud fuchsia kissed the prickly gorse
And garden roses lived with gaudy broom.
From the low chimneys curled the wreathing smoke,
Mixed with the ambient air and lost its being.

Upon this scene the Shepherd oft had looked :
At early morn when sea-fogs scoured the land,
At noon when every mist was driven back,

At evening when the moonlight kissed the sea.
Now as he gazed, upon this summer day,
He shaped his thoughts in fashion like to this:—

Twice twenty summers now have crossed my head,
And times full twenty has the biting wolf
Of Poverty barked harshly at my door.
Alone have I walked through the valley drear,
Holding it ever as a maxim wise
‘Better one perish with a scanty loaf,
Than rear a family all ill content.’
An easy truth to practise: I ne’er had
The golden keys that open tender breasts,
And gain admittance, when an honest love
Is spurned with righteous horror from the door.
No kith or kin had I since that sad day
When from the lowly thatch upon the hill,
They took my father to his breathless sleep:
But ever since without a purpose, as
A barque that drifts upon a leaden sea,

Deserted by her crew, is carried on
Where'er the wind and tide dictate her course—
So have I, without rudder, drifted down
The stream of life, not heeding as I passed
The blossoms or the weeds upon the banks :
And thus I thought to reach the silent goal,
Unheeding, and unheeded by, my kind :
Tending with constant watchfulness my flocks,
That by most careful saving and all shifts
I have at length obtained (they are my whole)
Upon the hill-side by the pleasant sea.
Oh! how I love the smiling dark blue sea,
And joy to watch the wanton kiss it gives
To each smooth pebble on the shining beach ;
To hear the tinkle of the laughing wave,
And catch the motion of its heaving breast.
Strike, silver tongues, upon the sounding rocks ;
Ring, silver bells, and make me dream of those
That clatter from the belfry when a bride
Leans on a strong man's arm, the service o'er,

While happy children strew their path with flowers.
And shall the marriage bell e'er ring for me?
Or must I be for evermore content
With thy soft tinkle, merry little wave?
Ah me! I fancied I had taught myself
With thy sweet presence evermore to be
Contented, asking no huge happiness:
Holding a voiceless converse with thy depths,
Feasting my eyes upon thy thousand charms,
Listening enraptured to thy melodies,
Trusting the shore that lies beyond thy beat.
But now my life is changed: an alien power
Has gained dominion where thou wert supreme,
And though I do not love thee less, true friend,
I do not love thee only, as I did.
'Tis but a repetition of the tale,
The story old—so old yet ever new.
O foolish heart, and more than foolish tongue!
When words betray the feelings, and the lips
Play false to every secret, then what hope

To hold the fortress fast and keep it whole?
For I have not whereon to build a home :
And hope, that dies so slowly when one loves,
Has almost fled in blank dismay my breast,
So shifting is the soil on which to raise
The scaffolding of my most fragile plan,
Whereby I trust that even yet I shall
Be able home with heart to offer her ;
A decent dwelling, and substantial store
Of meat and drink, and dress as women love.
And in my monster scheme thou, little wave,
Must play the chiefest part : so hear my plot.
Not lightly have I schemed, nor without care
Determined on my plan of action, thus—
Ten miles from here lies Vantor market-town :
Thither next market-day will I repair
With all my flocks, and whosoever then
Says fairest shall be owner of my sheep.
The money gotten I will hire a craft,
And load her hold with native merchandise,

With stuffs most valued in the foreign marts,
And goods that strangers highly prize and laud.
Then casting all upon thee, smiling wave,
I will adventure forth to other shores,
And with large profit all my wares exchange :
Return before the autumn suns have set,
And gain a home to open to my love :
I yet will earn my bread as heretofore,
And stock for her a shop with needed goods.
And thus, if Fortune smile upon my plans,
We may find sunshine in the years to come.

Then passed the Shepherd to his lowly home,
Resolved to carry out his brave design.
Nor did he let soft pity stay his course,
Though 'twas a grief to sell those cared-for sheep.
To market went he, bent on one result,
And there his flocks produced a handsome sum.
The money gotten he procured a craft
Which should convey his goods to foreign shores.

Then followed many days of anxious care
Spent in the stores of various merchandise.
At length, the money furnished by his sheep
Being nearly all expended, his next care
Was lading the good ship which he had hired
To take his wares across the friendly sea.

And now all things were ready for the voyage :
But few and brief his rough, sincere farewells.
And she, for whom he ventured forth, was gone
To visit kinsmen in a distant town :
So from her lips came to him no God-speed.
And now the hour was come when he should sail
Who never yet had been upon the deep :
But in his heart was hope, and joyous pride,
When he beheld the swelling sails above,
The stir around him, and the waves beneath.
And all was calm and fair to look upon :
And all was bright, as God's own sun in heaven :
But not until the many-coloured clouds

Lost their warm tints, and grew of dullish hue,
The slight breeze freshened, and the canvas filled :
Then all were glad, and waited for the dawn,
Which coming found them out of sight of land,
And plunging in the furrows of the deep.

And all was well through three succeeding days :
But on the fifth the breeze became a gale,
Which, with increasing fury, grew each hour
Until the wind raged like a maniac,
Who, broken from his cell, and rushing forth
Across the fields, lays here and there his hand,
And strikes unmeaningly at all that comes
Upon his aimless path with hellish power.
In wild despair, and hoping but for life,
The sailors cast into the clamorous waves
The cargo stowed within the vessel's hold,
And much of the provision for the voyage.
The ship thus lightened battled with the storm,
And floated through the fearful hours of night :

Like one whose triumph in a deadly feud
Has cost him all except a few hours' life.
With the next morn a sail appeared in sight,
(It chanced she was a trader, homeward bound,
Of that same port from which the Shepherd sailed)
And beating up, spoke the ill-fated craft :
And offered to her crew a passage home.
Then sadly was the proffered aid received,
And silently the friendly deck was gained.

The crazy ship deserted beat about,
Until her shattered timbers fell apart,
And, floating here and there with wind and tide,
At length were washed upon a distant shore :
Where laughing children found them at their play
And thanked the luck which brought them such a prize.

Meantime the vessel, which by God's good grace
Had snatched the Shepherd from an ocean grave,
Has gained the port, from which he lately sailed

So full of hope, and promise of large gain.
Glad seamen rushed to meet their anxious wives,
And happy children hugged their fathers' knee.
'Midst all the Shepherd stood, a ruined man,
No flocks : no home to open to his love :
The finger of despair upon his brow,
The joyless beat of life within his breast.
Yet with that instinct, wonderful and strong,
Which makes men cling to life however hard,
He sought to tend another's sheep for hire :
And found employment—went about his work
Like one who walks in sleep, so dead to all
Around him, wanting interest in his toil ;
Yet working in a dull, mechanic round,
And, all uncared-for, giving none offence.
A broken man, whom children viewed with awe :
By all his fellows eyed with half disdain,
Half pity : but by woman's softer heart
Regarded with a sorrowing, sad concern.

In time the story of his dismal fate
Was noised abroad through all the country side,
And by his honest life, and even course,
He won kind friends, and genial words from all :
But not her love for which he risked his all.

The course of suns at length brought round the day
On which he first had planned that fatal voyage :
And coming, found him at his daily toil.
And, as upon that distant day, the sun
Pouring on all a flood of living light,
And in the drowsy heavens no single cloud
Casting a shadow on the sleeping sea,
So now the Shepherd sat upon the shore,
Tending for hire another's fleecy flocks:
And as he gazed across the leagues of blue,
He shaped his thoughts in fashion like to this :—

O smooth, deceitful sea, thy glassy wave
Is but a reflex of the sky above.

At early morn it shrouds itself in mists,
Towards noon the sun breaks through the serried ranks,
And all is bright throughout the world of God.
But, as the sun goes down, a host of clouds
Dares venture on the face of the blue heaven :
And winds start out, as 'twere from crannied rocks :
And forked lightnings join the gathering storm,
Like evil spirits tempted to a feast
Unholy and accursed ; with them come
Attendant thunders, sounding wild alarms,
And waking with rude mirth the shrouded world :
And on them all comes night, as 'twere a pall
To cover what is ghastly and unclean.
Now as a man, who, trusting in the noon,
Has wandered thoughtlessly o'er hill and dale,
And stopped a hundred times to praise his God,
And all the beauty of His smiling earth,
And all the splendour of His sapphire sky,
Is buried in the sudden raid of storm,
And, when the fierceness of the charge has passed,

Is found a charred, distorted, trampled heap,
So I, allured by thy most winning face,
Have ventured into what I find, too late,
Is storm, and ruin, and despair, and night !

*EDWARD GEOFFREY SMITH STANLEY,
FOURTEENTH EARL OF DERBY.*

OBITU MDCCCLXIX.

I.

Profound, profound
The sense of loss
That steals over turret, and steeple, and cross :
And falls to the ground,
As the fatal sound
Like the boom of a distant cannonade
Swells farther and farther and farther round,
And tells of a debt that is paid :
And speaks of a voice that is laid
For ever !

II.

Flashed round the coast of the Island he loved,
 Flashed through the wire over mountain and plain,
 Borne on the breath of the crowd in the street,
 Carried by horseman and shrill-screaming train,
 Flies abroad the tale of a grief—
 Of a grievous loss to his country and Queen,
 Of a loss to letters, and science and art,
 Of a loss that will make our Christmas dim ;
 But a gain to him
 For ever !

III.

Statesman and Orator ! Scholar and Bard !
 Strong vital essence, that fought to the last,
 True was the soul that has past,
 Steady the hand that has fallen.
 O champion of an ancient cause,
 Unmoved by thunders of applause,

Unscared by murmurs of dissent,

Gone to the vale of rest

No sound shall wake thee more :

Alike pass by

The south wind's sigh,

Or the torrent's awful roar.

IV.

O peerless warrior in debate,

O princely peer in social state,

O Victor in a hundred bloodless fights,

Mourned by a world, thou hast fallen asleep

In the midst of those who best can tell

Of thy noble heart, and outstretched hand,

That wrought so hard to serve them well

When famine stalked about the land !

SONGS WITHOUT NAMES.

‘My darling in the distant world.’

My darling in the distant world
(I do not mean the world to be),
I hold a life within a life—
A rock that scorns the towering sea.

And on that rock, your name is writ,
And, underneath your name, my love :
And these shall brave the foaming surge,
And all the bolts that flash above.

‘ Wild waves that crush the oaken ribs.’

Wild waves that crush the oaken ribs,
And drown the spark of life in man,
And whistle at his curse or prayer,
And mock the psalmist’s measured span,

Roll onward to the southern shore
Where dwells the lady of my love,
And throw your arms about the land,
And all along the margin move :

And bear this message to my queen,
The sea that lashed the cowering world
Against the fortress of my love
In vain its thundering masses hurled !

‘The drug that poisons all my life.’

The drug that poisons all my life,
The cloud that dims each joyous scene,
Ah ! would you know the fatal spell ?
It is, the thought what might have been !

My future is a starless plain
O'er which, by fate compelled to roam,
Whatever way my footsteps turn
I do but wander from my home :

That home, a little world of light
That lessens in the dying past,
As round its ever-fading orb
My life's dark night is closing fast.

‘Throughout all the sad day.’

Throughout all the sad day I long for the morrow,
I cannot tell why but I want it to come :
Perhaps to be one day removed from my sorrow,
One stage on the wearisome journey towards home.

So all through the drear day I look for the morrow,
I cannot say why but I wait for its dawn :
The darkest of days towards evening will borrow
A cloak for the sadness it wore in its morn.

And thus, looking back in the Past, I remember
Some hours that appear wholly bright to me now ;
I think of the warm autumn suns of September
But not of the dead leaf, and desolate bough.

SONNET TO W. P.

O bound to me by more than ties of blood,
By human sympathy and generous aid,
Which have aroused within me all the good,
And given strong hope to that which was dismayed,
Thy roof hath sheltered me for many a day :
Thy hand hath lifted me from many a fall :
Thy voice hath often cheered the toilsome way.
Look on these lines as shadows on a wall
(Which of some substance must the reflex be),
And call them the reflection of a heart
Now running o'er with gratitude to thee,
Which feeble language cannot all impart :
Draw largely on my wealth of love at pleasure,
Nor by weak words my deep devotion measure.

SPRING TIME.

Of all the days in the changing year
O give me the sweet later spring,
When the fair May faints at the bright June's birth
And dies while the nightingales sing.

We live again in those incensed hours
The happiest days of our lives :
We grow with the flowers and the freshening showers,
And the bloom on our fancy revives.

We are young once more when the fields are green,
And fresh as the cowslip and rose :
We drink an elixir of magical power
In each exquisite zephyr that blows.

We praise our God, and we love His earth ;
We know that His creatures are fair ;
And we find sweet music in each clear rill,
And a choir in the birds of the air.

We see that the beautiful valley of life,
As our Father has made it, is sweet :
And we pass along with a joyous song,
And we check our hurrying feet.

R. I. P.

One spirit more before The Throne
Is bathed in light we dare not see :
As yet we can but trust and trust,
And credit all that is to be.

O truest friend ! O kindest heart !
Dear life, so early gone to rest :
It were not well to wish thee back,
Or lift thee from the Sacred Breast.

I pass about a heedless world,
And feel a grief I cannot speak :
I know my thoughts of thee are sweet,
Though all the words I write were weak.

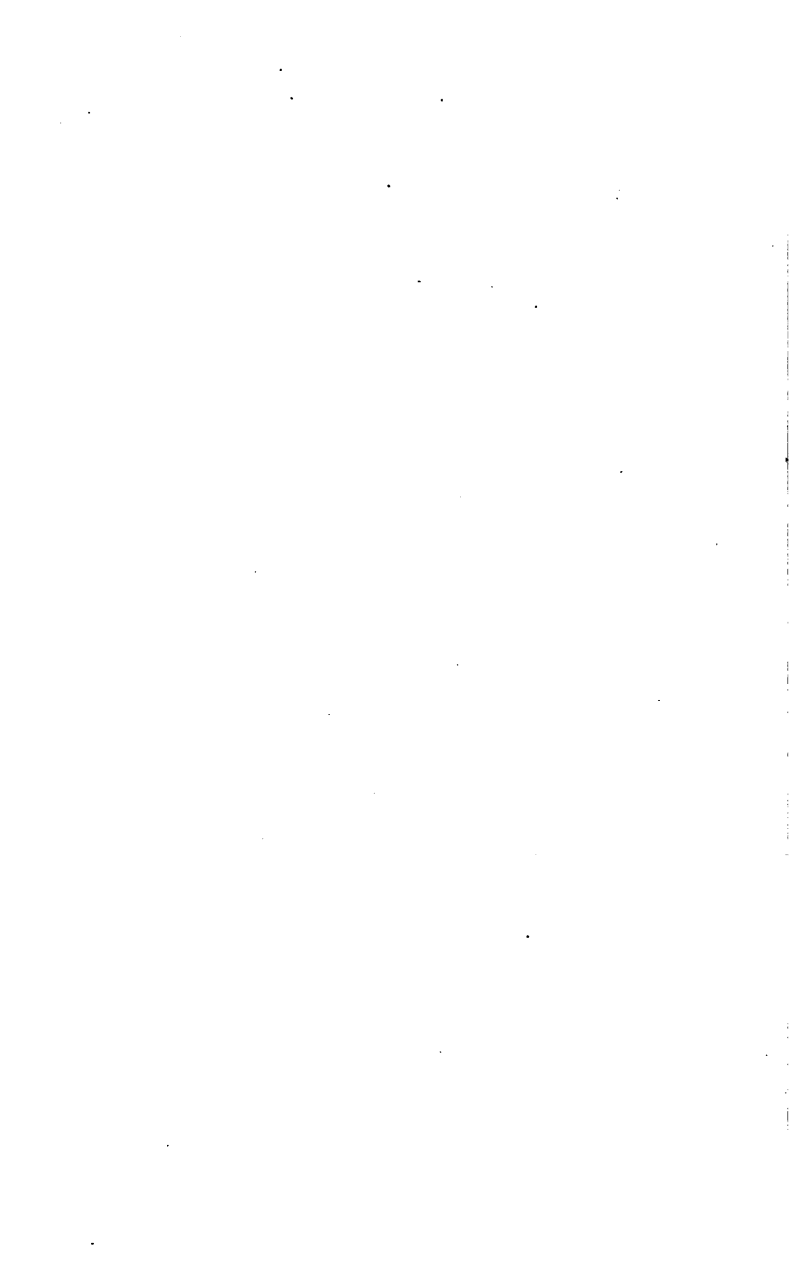
ECHO.

Echo, Echo, Echo,
So clear, distinct and still ;
I hear it coming towards me
From the hollow under the hill.

Echo, Echo, Echo ;
The echo of one dear name,
Passing into the distance
On pinions of crimson flame.

Echo, Echo, Echo ;
The echo of all my song,
Lost in life's vast commotion
And the great world's restless throng.

Echo, Echo, Echo ;
Where will it sink to rest ?
Will it fail to find a welcome,
And return to die in my breast ?





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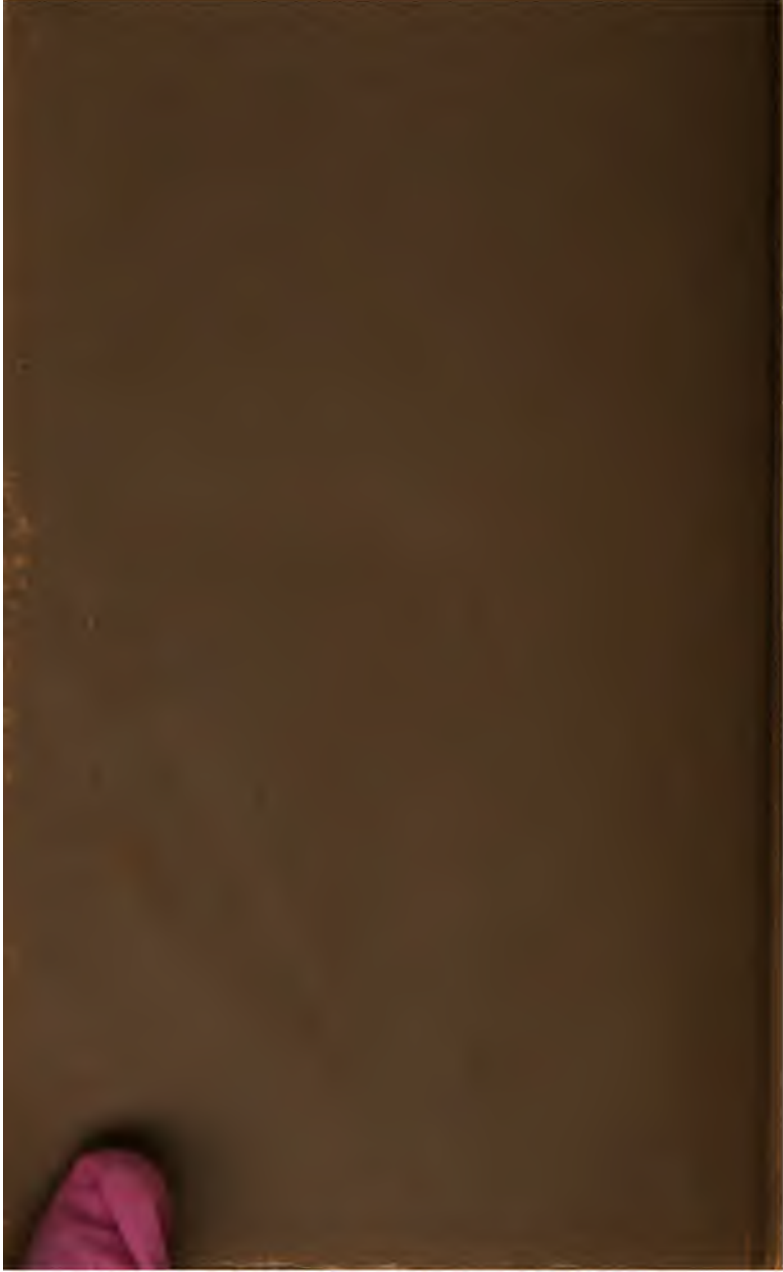
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